

STATE BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION NO. I-9-03 CORRECTED

August 18, 2003

The following is offered in response to your letter to me which was undated but received in this office on May 30, 2003 in which you seek a formal interpretation of Section 403.1 of the 1995 CABO One and Two Family Dwelling Code portion of the 1999 State Building Code.

Question: Are the stairs leading to grade from an exterior deck required to comply with Section 403.1 for frost protection? If so, is the number of risers relevant?

Answer: If the total size of the deck and stairs exceeds 200 square feet, all portions of the deck, including the stairs regardless of the number of risers, are required to rest on frost-protected footings (min. 42 inches below grade). If the total size of the deck, including the stairs is 200 square feet or less in area, then the deck and stairs, as accessory to the dwelling, are exempt from the frost protection requirement in accordance with the exception to the referenced section.

Note: The 2003 International Residential Code, which the State is planning to adopt in 2004, contains a provision that differs from the current requirements and is available for use through the building code modification process: Decks (including their stairs) of any size that are structurally independent of the dwelling are exempt from the requirement for frost protected footings.